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Letter dated 19 July 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Barely 24 hours after 8 Israelis were killed by Palestinian terrorists aboard a passenger bus near Emmanuel, 2 suicide bombers struck in the heart of Tel Aviv, killing 3 and injuring 40, 5 of them seriously.

The attack occurred on Wednesday evening, at approximately 10.20 p.m. (local time), in the southern Tel Aviv neighbourhood of Neve Sha'anan, an area known to be crowded with shops and outdoor food stalls. Standing about 15 metres apart, the two suicide bombers detonated their charges almost simultaneously, sending pedestrians in the area scrambling for cover. Two of those killed in the attack were foreign nationals, one from Romania and the other from China. The attack occurred on the evening of Tish'a B'av, when Jews around the world gather to commemorate and mourn the destruction of the two ancient Jewish temples in Jerusalem. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack.

Israel holds the Palestinian Authority and its Chairman, Yasser Arafat, responsible for the ongoing campaign of terrorism directed against the citizens of Israel. The Palestinian Authority has used every tool of its leadership to cultivate an atmosphere conducive to the perpetration of acts of terrorism, including the incitement to violence in the official media, the hatred of Jews and Israelis taught in Palestinian schools, and the financial and logistic support it provides to known terrorists.

The continuation of Palestinian attacks underscores the need for defensive measures to protect Israeli citizens from this threat. Although it is impossible to thwart every attempted action, countless terror attacks have been prevented in recent weeks by the ongoing efforts of Israeli forces. So long as the Palestinian Authority refuses to fulfil its responsibility to fight terrorism, in accordance with its signed obligations and the resolutions of the Security Council, Israel will be left with no choice but to take the actions it deems necessary in exercise of its right to self-defence.

Israel calls upon the Palestinian Authority to take the steps required for a cessation of acts of terrorism and the resumption of a political process. Only once

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the Palestinian Authority takes action to prevent terrorist attacks directed against Israeli civilians can there by any hope of arriving at a comprehensive peace settlement capable of addressing the legitimate needs and aspirations of both sides.

I submit the present letter in follow-up to my numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda Lancry
Permanent Representative